REMARKS

BY

WILLIAM H. WEBSTER

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

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I am very pleased to be back with you again. I can assure you first of all that my love of the Constitution and my anticipation of that cup of coffee will keep me from keeping you too long. That was a very gracious introduction and I appreciate it. The one credential that I thought maybe Kay* would mention, and she didn't, is that I have some claim to kinship with you. I was the editor-in-chief of the Amherst Student, and Kay ought to remember that because she was dating the business manager at the time I first met her.

I first had the privilege of addressing this association exactly 10 years ago tonight, on April 11, 1978. There were three of us who spoke -- Stansfield Turner, who was the Director of the CIA at the time; myself; and Barbara Walters, who had just returned from her famous interview with Begin. We were introduced as the nation's top spy, top cop, and top negotiator, and I think Barbara had the best of the evening. I look back on that speech because it was one of my very first in a new role in which I was terribly concerned about what I would say, and I was speaking carefully from a printed text. My speechwriters had filled the text with statistics -- the likes of which I have never uttered before or since. But it was a good evening and I remember it well.

That same year, I was exposed to another challenge when, if you remember, in late 1978 we had a terrible tragedy in Jonestown, Guyana. It was on a Sunday morning, and I was in New York addressing the Anti-Defamation League at their annual meeting. After I finished, I received a message to call Dr. Brzezinski immediately, and they had cordoned off a bank of telephone booths for me. I went out and a great many television cameras were there, primarily because of the Jonestown situation. I got on the phone and Zbig said, "Where are you?" And I said, "I'm in New York". He said, "That's too

*Katherine Fanning, President of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

bad, I was looking for a tennis game." The problem is, what do you say to that crew of photographers and reporters when you finish a conversation like that? Well, during the nine years that I had the privilege of serving at the FBI, I came to appreciate not only your importance to the country, but also the important role that you play in carrying the message of an institution like the FBI. That message serves a very valid purpose -- which the FBI has always appreciated -- and that is to inform the public of its role and to enlist public support. The FBI needs public support, so that when FBI agents knock on doors, people are cooperative and unafraid. Because of that, there has always been an effort at the FBI to reach out to the public through the media. In some years, there was perhaps too much of an effort to manipulate the press, and we paid a high price for that.

But the media serves another purpose too, and that is accountability. Organizations like the FBI are indeed accountable to the public, and one of the ways we are accountable is through the press. We must demonstrate that we are not only accountable, but we operate under a set of rules -- under law. The stories about what the FBI is doing and how things are being done help form the public image of the FBI. Problems of confidentiality exist, and we had many, many years of wrestling over the Freedom of Information Act and how we could best inform the public and give access to our records, while at the same time protect the confidentiality of our information. Through it all, I think we encouraged an open relationship with great emphasis on accuracy.

The men and women at the FBI and now at the CIA are getting used to hearing me say: "I don't like to take things back." We find that if we can get the right story out the first time around and if we have done our

homework, then we do not have that terrible credibility gap that comes with revisions and revisions and more revisions.

But the CIA's relationship with the media is somewhat more complicated than the FBI's, and that's what I'd like to talk to you about tonight. I want to promote the view that certain kinds of information must be protected -- shared only with the elected representatives of the American people and with the oversight committees who act as surrogates for the Congress and for the American people. I want to talk about the type of relationship between government and the media that works best in our society -- a relationship of candor and cooperation on particularly sensitive subjects.

Protecting information is not the same as hiding it. Indeed, what would be the point of collecting information if it is not shared with those who have the responsibility for making policy decisions?

And we have been sharing that information with the Congress. Fifteen years ago, the CIA logged in 175 briefings for the Congress. Last year, we provided over 1,000 briefings to members of Congress and congressional committees. It frankly makes my head spin. In the time I've been here, we've been briefing them on such diverse subjects as arms control, Soviet weaponry, the situations in the Persian Gulf, Angola, Africa, Afghanistan, Latin America, Korea, China -- even the spread of AIDS in Africa. Five thousand reports went to Congress last year from the Central Intelligence Agency.

More than a little time has been spent giving testimony, that favorite pastime of senior officials in Washington. And I guess I paid my dues last year. But because I know of the need to be absolutely candid with the Congress and the responsibility that intelligence professionals have to

protect their sources and their methods, I've established some guidelines governing our dealings with the Congress. I have made it absolutely clear that in dealing with the Congress, there is no excuse for deception.

I firmly believe that the oversight responsibilities exercised by Congress are both necessary and beneficial. There must be a dependable system of oversight and accountability which builds, rather than erodes, trust between those who have the intelligence collection responsibility and those who are the elected representatives of the American people.

I am meeting monthly with the chairman and vice chairman of the oversight committees -- and meeting less frequently but on demand with the full committees themselves. We have a shared responsibility to protect the nation's secrets.

But intelligence professionals, like journalists, have a responsibility to protect their sources and their methods, and I think you understand that. And while all intelligence activities are subject to congressional oversight, I am required by law to protect the sources and the methods by which we in the Intelligence Community collect our information.

There are instances where information pertaining to national security must not be released outside the congressional oversight committees; this includes information that could jeopardize lives or information that threatens the means by which we protect ourselves. The disclosure of technical systems or cryptographic information alerts a hostile nation to the need to develop countermeasures and can seriously hamper our intelligence efforts. Some of the systems we develop came awfully hard and at great cost to the American people, and can be easily lost. In signals intelligence, for example, if one

sensitive piece of information is published, it could put an entire intelligence collection system out of use. An enormous amount of time, planning, and money would be required to replace it.

Information that is published need not even be accurate to do irreparable harm to our intelligence capabilities. Let me give you an example. Since this is an unclassified forum, I hope you will understand if I'm not too specific. Not too long ago there was a brief flurry of news stories purporting to be based on classified intelligence information indicating that the Soviets had carried out certain military experiments. The stories were largely inaccurate. Yet comments on the situation -- again mostly inaccurate -- were attributed to a number of U.S. officials. Some of these officials confirmed the story, one denied it, and yet another corrected the initial story. The statements by these officials served to heighten speculation and to sustain public focus on matters involving highly sensitive U.S. intelligence collection techniques.

After these stories were published, the Soviets took countermeasures which eliminated our access to this type of intelligence. In short, even though the information discussed by these U.S. officials was incorrect, the net result was a further loss for U.S. intelligence.

Regrettably, some view the Intelligence Community's responsibility to protect sources and methods as a threat to a free press. I have found that most members of the press are more than willing to cooperate when we have clearly stated the reasons why certain information would jeopardize national interests. And I have tried very hard to limit my requests or those of my agency to those critical situations.

Let me give you an example of how the press responded -- quite properly in my view -- when lives were at stake. Seymour Topping, who's with us tonight, was involved in one case that concerned some of the American hostages in Iran in 1980. Cy Vance, the Secretary of State, called him and said he knew that The New York Times had a story about the Canadians who were harboring some of the American hostages. Vance asked Topping if the Times could hold the story for another 48 to 72 hours, or until our government knew that the hostages were free and clear. There was no question in Topping's mind that the Times would withhold the story, and they did. He told me tonight that Cy Vance called him just as soon as the hostages were free. There again was an example of how we can work together.

Last fall, a reporter from a major newspaper, whose editor is here tonight, requested a meeting with Bill Baker, my Public Affairs Director at CIA, also present tonight, to discuss extremely sensitive information that had come into his possession about Middle Eastern terrorism. Bill advised the reporter that without any doubt his information, if published, could endanger a valuable source of intelligence and could result in loss of life. The reporter agreed to withhold the story and to this day has not published it. There have been other instances in which the press has withheld stories or written them in a way that preserved the confidentiality of intelligence sources, and sometimes we can be helpful in this way. This cooperation is a result of the credibility and good faith that we have worked to establish with the press.

Our policy with the media -- as it is with the Congress -- is to be both candid and responsive. We frequently schedule background briefings for

reporters who request information on international developments. And I think this is important. If we cannot answer a specific question, we will tell you that we cannot answer it and we will not try to mislead you by inventing a response or by being disingenuous in any way. That is my approach. I have taken some heat on the Hill for it, but I believe that it's working and I'm going to continue to pursue it. You, more than any other group or profession, should understand the constraints under which an intelligence agency must operate. In this increasingly complicated world, it is our duty to the Intelligence Community to collect information, analyze it, and draw inferences and estimates from it. It is not always hard evidence -- given the places in the world where we collect it, it rarely will be. But, we must provide the most objective analysis that we can, free from any political or other pressures of any sort, so that the policymakers can make wise decisions in the interest of our national security. We cannot build the capability without confidentiality, the protection of our sources and our methods. You do the same. We will help you when we can, but when we don't it's not because we don't want to. It's because we can't. If there's a rub in that, let it be a healthy one, because -- if I will not offend your hard-bitten, weather-beaten skepticism -- we are all serving the cause of freedom in a better and safer world.

Thank you.